

communities in seeking these funds. Additional state and local funding is needed to help replicate successful pilot programs aimed at providing culturally appropriate and linguistically accessible primary care, immunization efforts, family planning, maternity services, behavioral health and dental services across the state.

**8. The lack of health data specific to North Carolina Latinos makes it more difficult to measure health disparities and use of health services.**

In the past, health data were not collected by race and ethnicity. More recently, some agencies and programs have started to collect these data, but it is difficult to establish baseline data or to make accurate comparisons across different Latino subcultures. In addition, private health care providers do not collect this information routinely, so it is difficult to measure the use of health services among North Carolina Latinos. State and local agencies and other health, behavioral health, dental, and human services providers should collect health, behavioral health, dental, and social services related data (including but not limited to utilization and health outcomes) by race and ethnicity. Data should be used to determine if Latinos are able to access needed health, behavioral health, dental, and social services and whether there are specific health disparities facing the Latino community.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Latino Health Task Force made a total of 33 recommendations to improve the health status of Latinos and increase access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health, behavioral health, dental, and social services. Task Force members understand that there are limited governmental and private funding sources available to address these needs. Therefore, the Task Force developed 13 priorities that, if implemented, would have a significant positive impact on the ability of Latinos to access needed health, behavioral health, dental and social services which would ultimately lead to improved health status. Because of the immediate need of bridging the language and cultural gap, most of the priority recommendations are aimed at expanding the availability of bilingual and bicultural providers. In addition, the Task Force made recommendations to expand the availability of primary, behavioral health and dental resources; remove barriers that deter families from applying for Medicaid, NC Health Choice and other publicly funded programs; provide meaningful workers' compensation for migrant and seasonal farmworkers; develop leadership within the Latino community to address health issues; address the problems of health literacy, including the lack of understanding of the US health system; and ensure that the state has adequate data to monitor health disparities and health access of the Latinos living and working in the state.

**To expand the availability of bilingual and bicultural providers, the Task Force recommended that:**

1. The Department of Health and Human Service help local communities in their efforts to recruit and retain bilingual and bicultural providers and to hire and train interpreters. The Department will take responsibility for identifying possible grant sources for these efforts, and will assist local com-